



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### DAY FORECASTS FALL FLIGHT OF DUCKS

"Duck hunters can anticipate increases over last year in the fall flights of wild ducks that will range from 'slight' to 'major' varying by flyways," Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, told members of the new Waterfowl Advisory Committee who met with him and other Service officials for the first time on August 6 in Washington.

In a forecast by flyways, based on an analysis of co-operative surveys made on the waterfowl breeding grounds this spring and summer, Director Day declared that "the fall flight of ducks in the Pacific Flyway will show a moderate to considerable increase over 1951 while the goose flight may be about the same.

"With increased breeding population and production, it seems definite that there will be a major increase in the number of ducks moving southward through the Central Flyway.

"The fall flight of ducks in the Mississippi Flyway will undoubtedly show a moderate improvement over last year.

"Hunters in the Atlantic Flyway may expect a small increase in dabbling ducks and at least a moderate increase of divers this fall."

The new Waterfowl Advisory Committee is composed of representatives from a number of private conservation organizations and two delegates from each of the four flyway councils formed within the past year. These eight members, together with the president of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners, are heads of State game departments. Other members of the new committee include prominent officials of the National Audubon Society, the Outdoor Writers Association of America, the Izaak Walton League, the Wildlife Management Institute, the National Wildlife Federation, and The Wildlife Society.

Mr. Day explained that August 6 had been selected as being the latest possible meeting date on which the Service could give to the Committee an accurate report on brood production and rate of survival of young birds on the northern breeding grounds. Since July 28, deadline for the receipt of breeding ground data, Service officials have been working day and night to analyze the mass of information on the status of waterfowl which will be used as the basis of the hunting regulations scheduled for release the latter part of August.

For the benefit of the committee, Director Day reviewed the results of the 1952 breeding ground surveys made by the Fish and Wildlife Service, Canadian Wildlife Service, the Provincial Game Departments, the Game Departments of 26 States, Ducks

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Unlimited, and other private conservation agencies which pooled their manpower and equipment. Waterfowl counts were made during 72,350 miles of aerial flights.

Director Day stated that "the data which we are presenting to you are not the product of any one agency's activity but rather are the result of many agencies working together. Through this co-operative effort, the summer observations have been considerably expanded over what they were only a very few years ago. They now reflect intensive effort over the entire breeding range of waterfowl."

Director Day also pointed out that in formulating the annual waterfowl hunting regulations, which are now under consideration for the 1952-53 season, the Service is guided largely in its decisions by data from three annual extensive surveys: the breeding population production survey; a hunting season kill survey; and a trend survey of winter numbers.

"The Service is now placing increased emphasis on the breeding ground surveys," he declared, "because they supply information on how many birds are produced annually, and give us the best material for forecasting the fall flights. The winter surveys are still of primary value in determining the status of geese and brant produced over widely scattered areas in the far north where breeding ground surveys have been difficult to conduct."

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